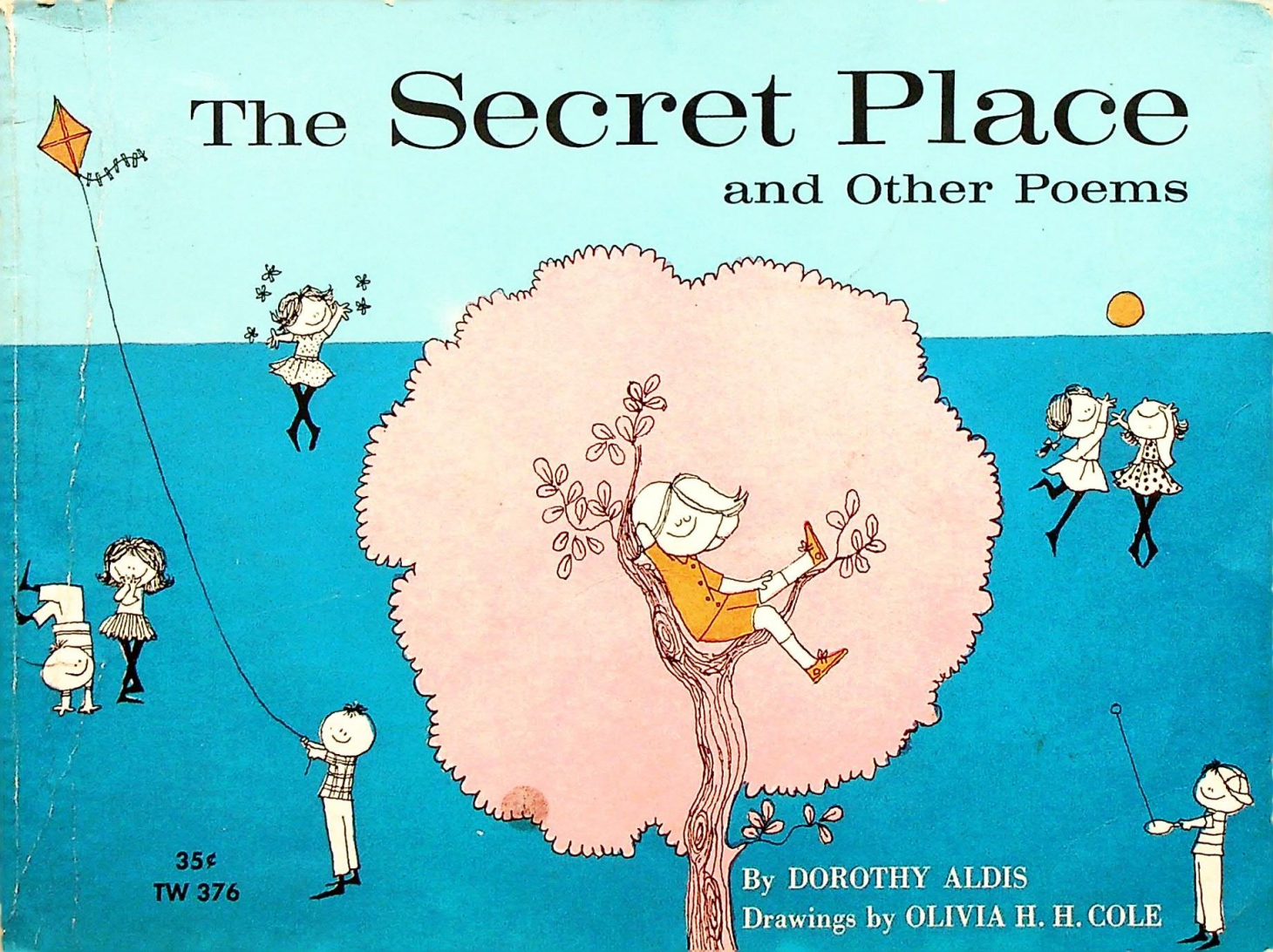
The Secret Place

and Other Poems



By DOROTHY ALDIS
Drawings by OLIVIA H. H. COLE

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The Secret Place

By Dorothy Aldis

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Dorothy Aldis:

ALL TOGETHER

EVERYTHING AND ANYTHING

HELLO DAY

HOP, SKIP, AND JUMP

QUICK AS A WINK

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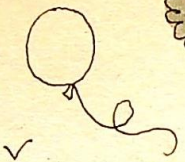
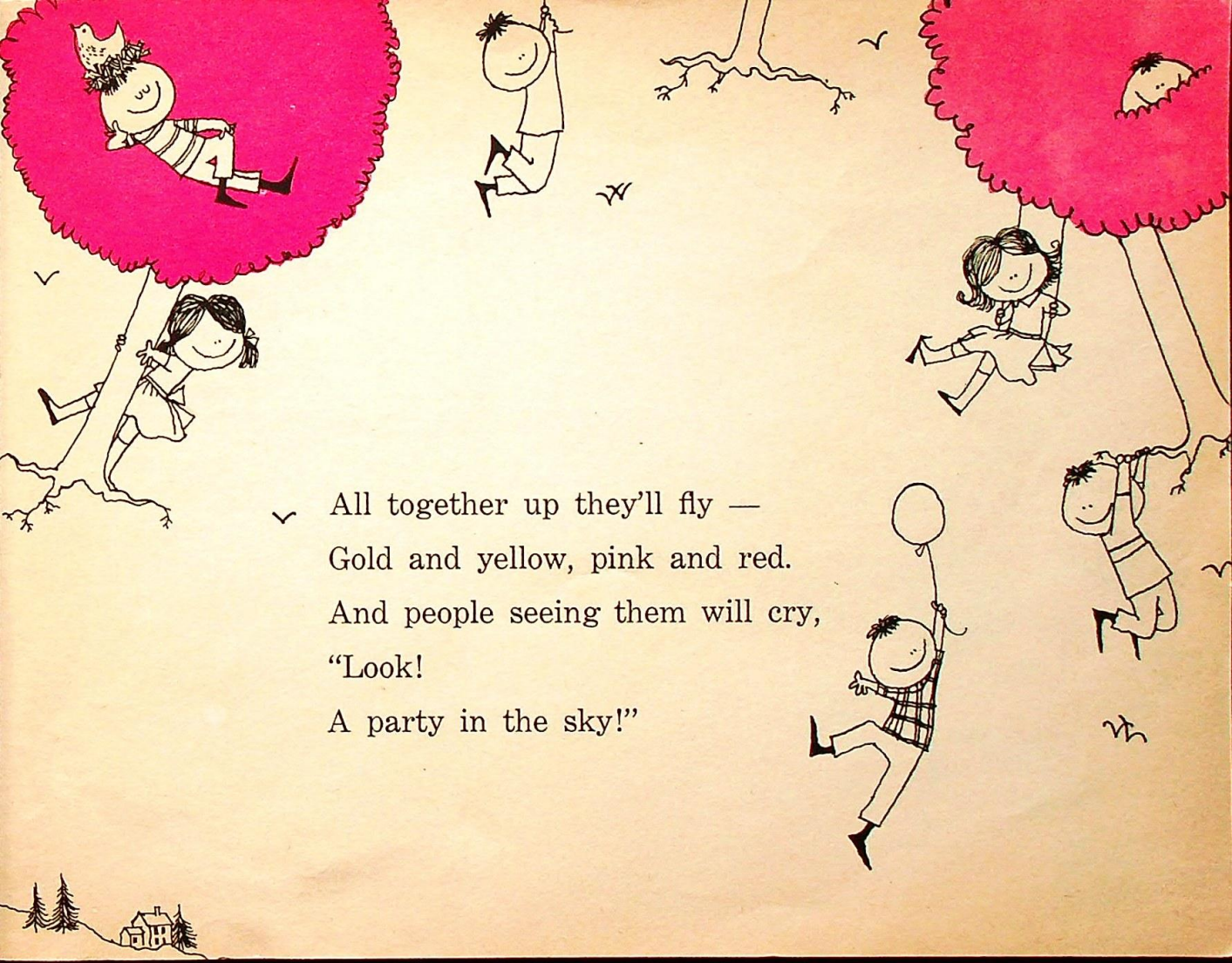


On Some Windy Day

In autumn every maple tree
Is bright as a balloon.
And maybe on some windy day
Like balloons
They'll blow away.



All together up they'll fly —
Gold and yellow, pink and red.
And people seeing them will cry,
"Look!
A party in the sky!"

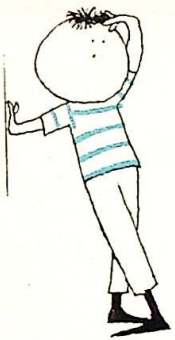
Winter Coats

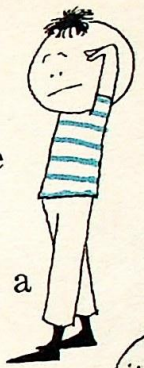
In October, when they know
That very soon there will be snow,

Cows and horses, sheep and goats,
Start to grow their winter coats.

Each year they grow them, fine and new
(And fitting very nicely too),
But with no buttons to undo,

Nor pockets for a handkerchief.
And so they have to snort and sniff.

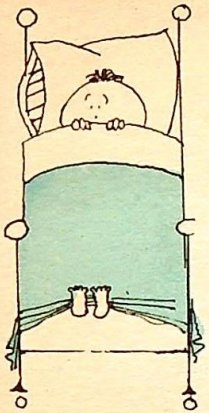


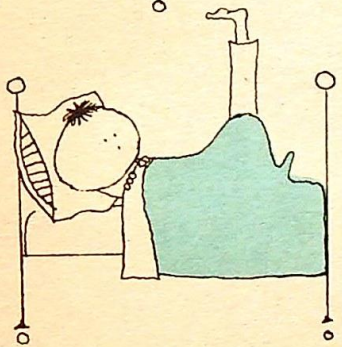


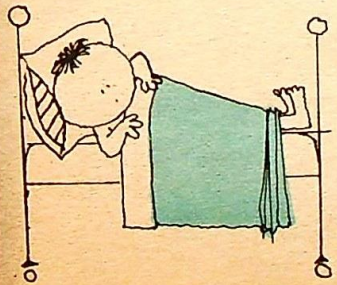
A Riddle: What Am I?

I was the one they chose. "See, he's the
Nicest one," they said.
And they carved me out a face and put a
Candle in my head.
And they set me on the doorstep, though the
Night was dark and wild,
And when they lit the candle, *how* I smiled!

This is what I am!

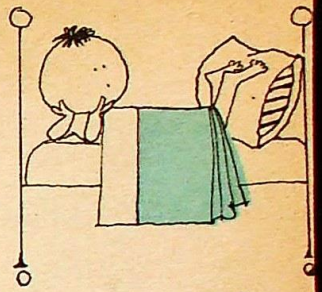


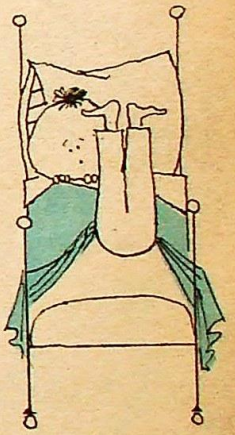


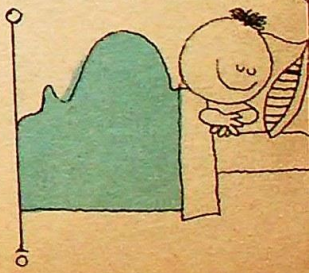


Winter Nights

Farther down than my toes
It is cold in my bed —
Sometimes I stretch them to see.
Then I curl them up quickly
Again instead,
Glad that it's warm
Under me.







On a Snowy Day

Fence posts wear marshmallow hats
On a winter's day.

Bushes in their nightgowns
Are kneeling down to pray.

And trees spread out their snowy skirts
Before they dance away.

Ice

When it is the winter time
I run up the street.
And I make the ice laugh
With my little feet—
"Crickle, crackle, crickle
Crrreeet, crrreeet, crrreeet."

My Nose

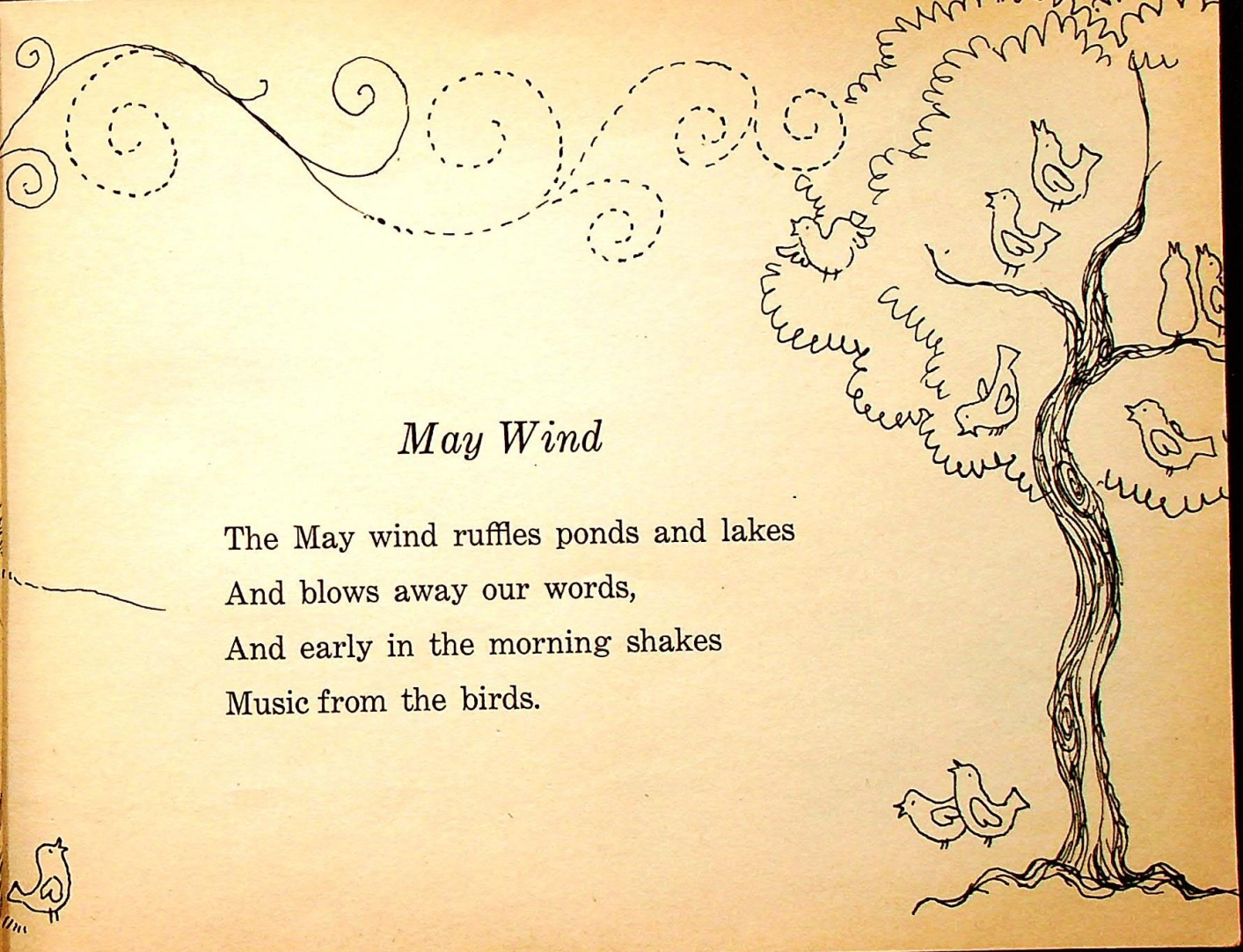
It doesn't breathe,
It doesn't smell,
It doesn't feel
So very well.

I am discouraged
With my nose.
The only thing it
Does is blows.

Brooms

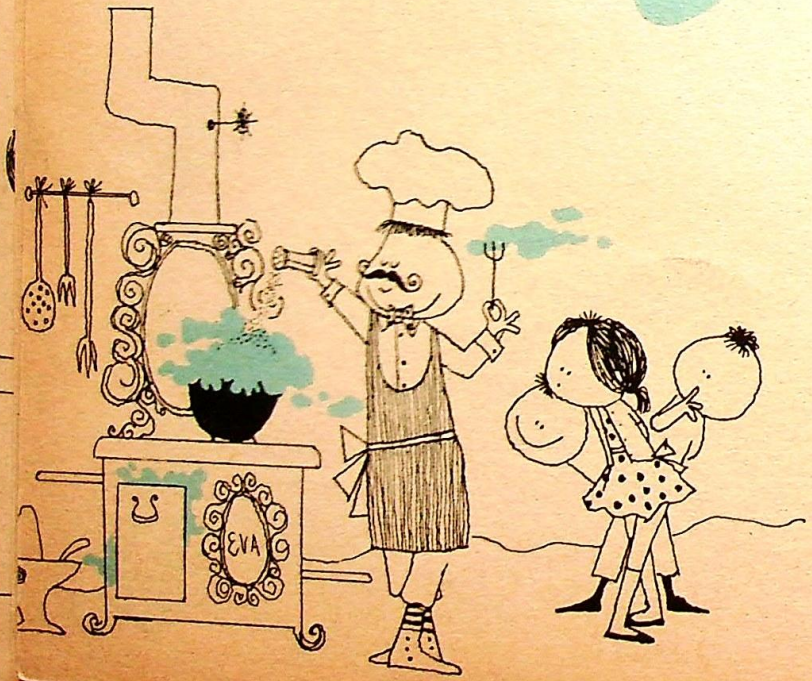
On stormy days
When the wind is high,
Tall trees are brooms
Sweeping the sky.

They swish their branches
In buckets of rain,
And swash and sweep it
Blue again.



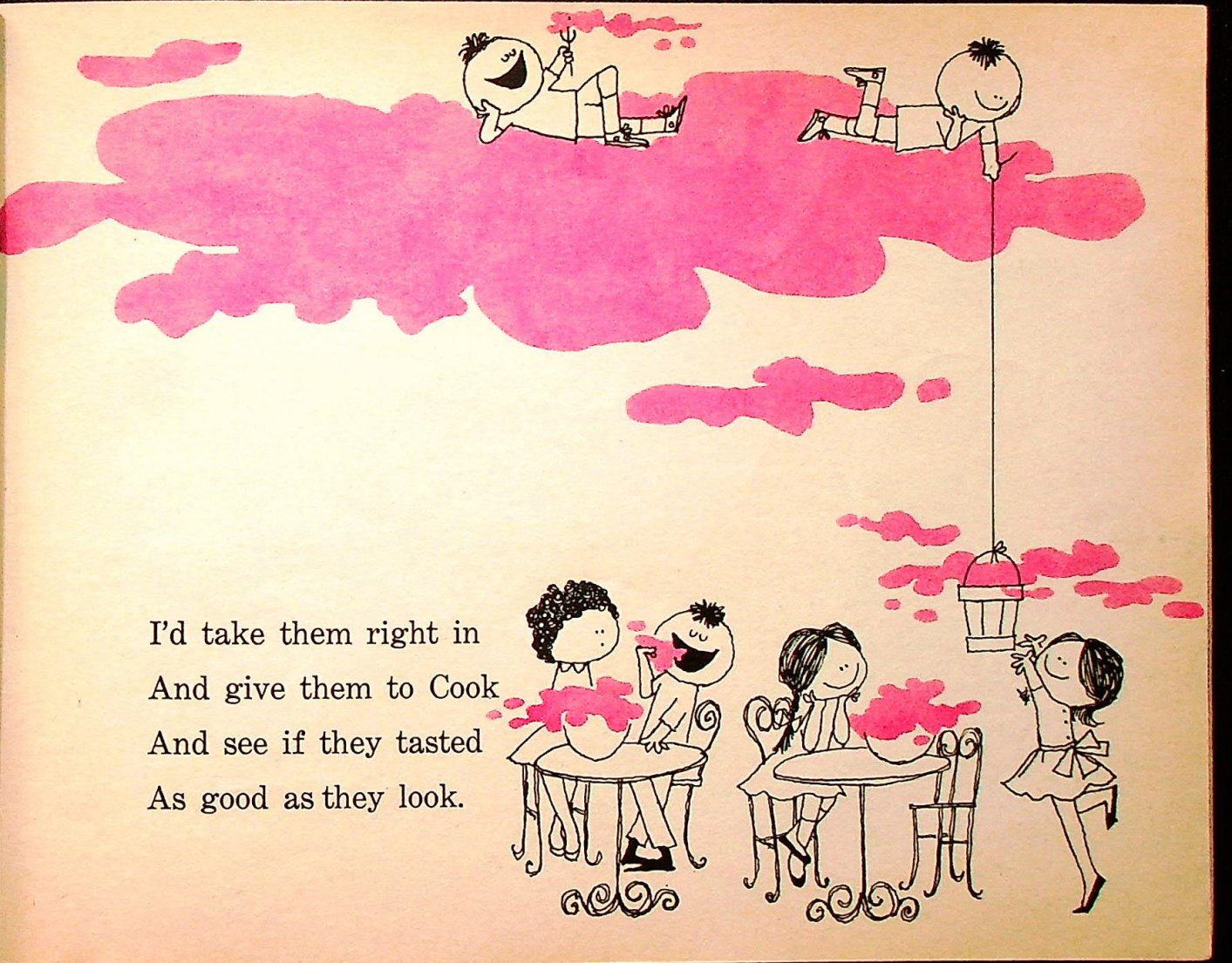
May Wind

The May wind ruffles ponds and lakes
And blows away our words,
And early in the morning shakes
Music from the birds.



Clouds

If I had a spoon
As tall as the sky,
I'd dish out the clouds
That go slip-sliding by.



I'd take them right in
And give them to Cook
And see if they tasted
As good as they look.

The Picnic

We brought a rug for sitting on.
Our lunch was in a box.
The sand was warm. We didn't wear
Hats or shoes or socks.

Waves came curling up the beach.
We waded. It was fun.
Our sandwiches were different kinds.
I dropped my jelly one.

Going to Sleep

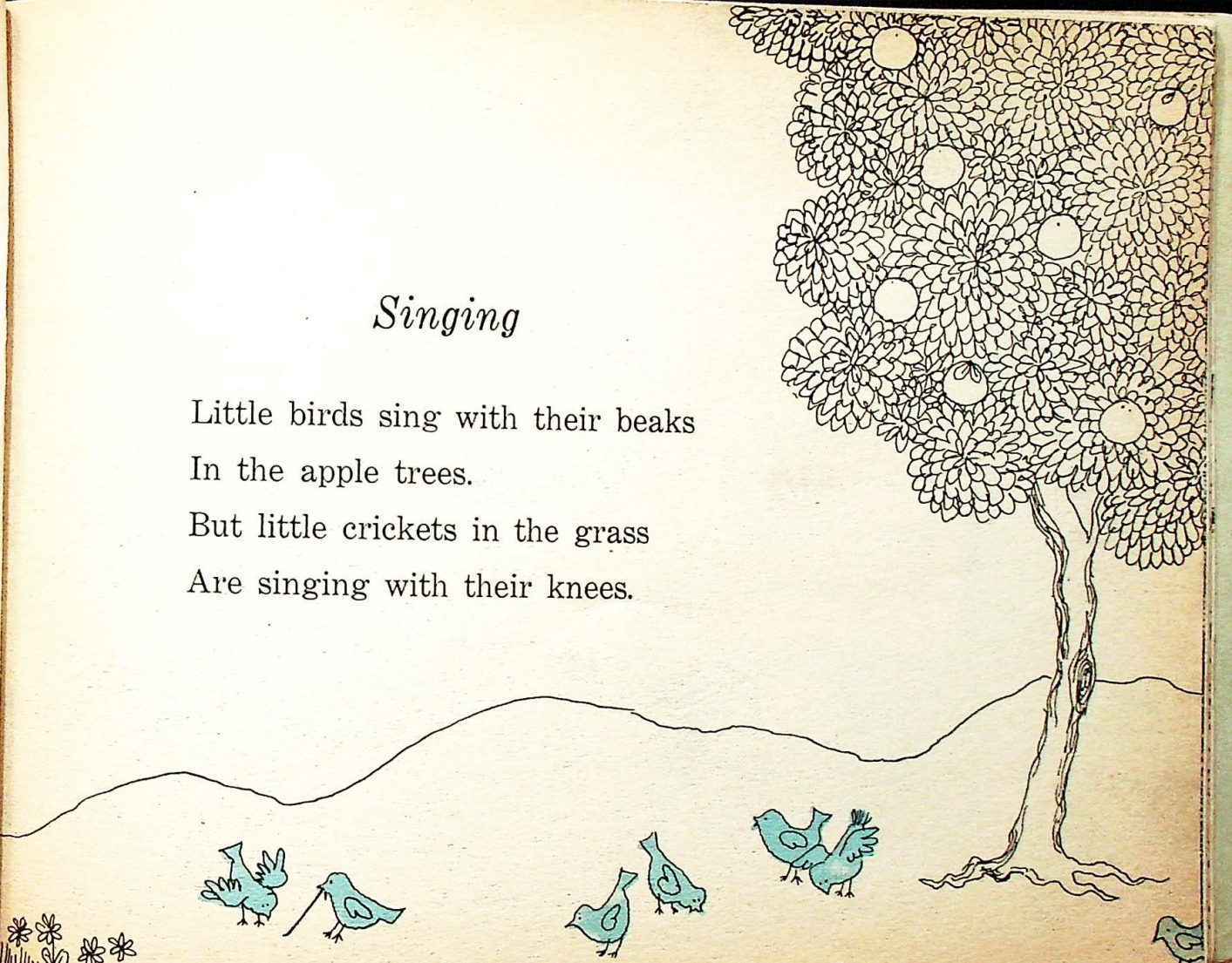
The safest feeling
In the world
Is to be lying
Warm and curled
In bed while in
The room next door
They talk . . . and then
Don't any more. . . .

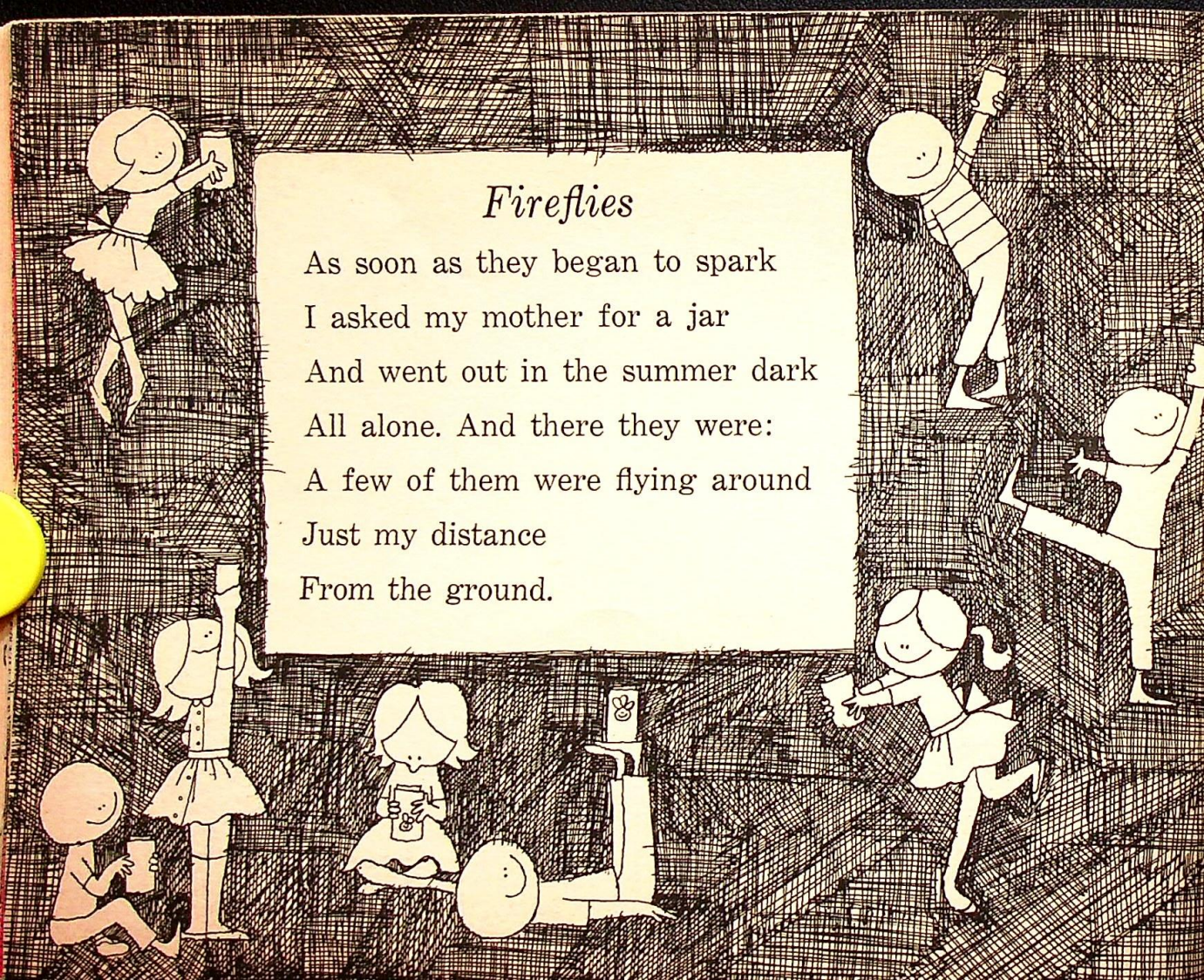
Early

I was up so tiptoe early
That the flowers were all pearly
As they waited in their places
For the sun to dry their faces.

Singing

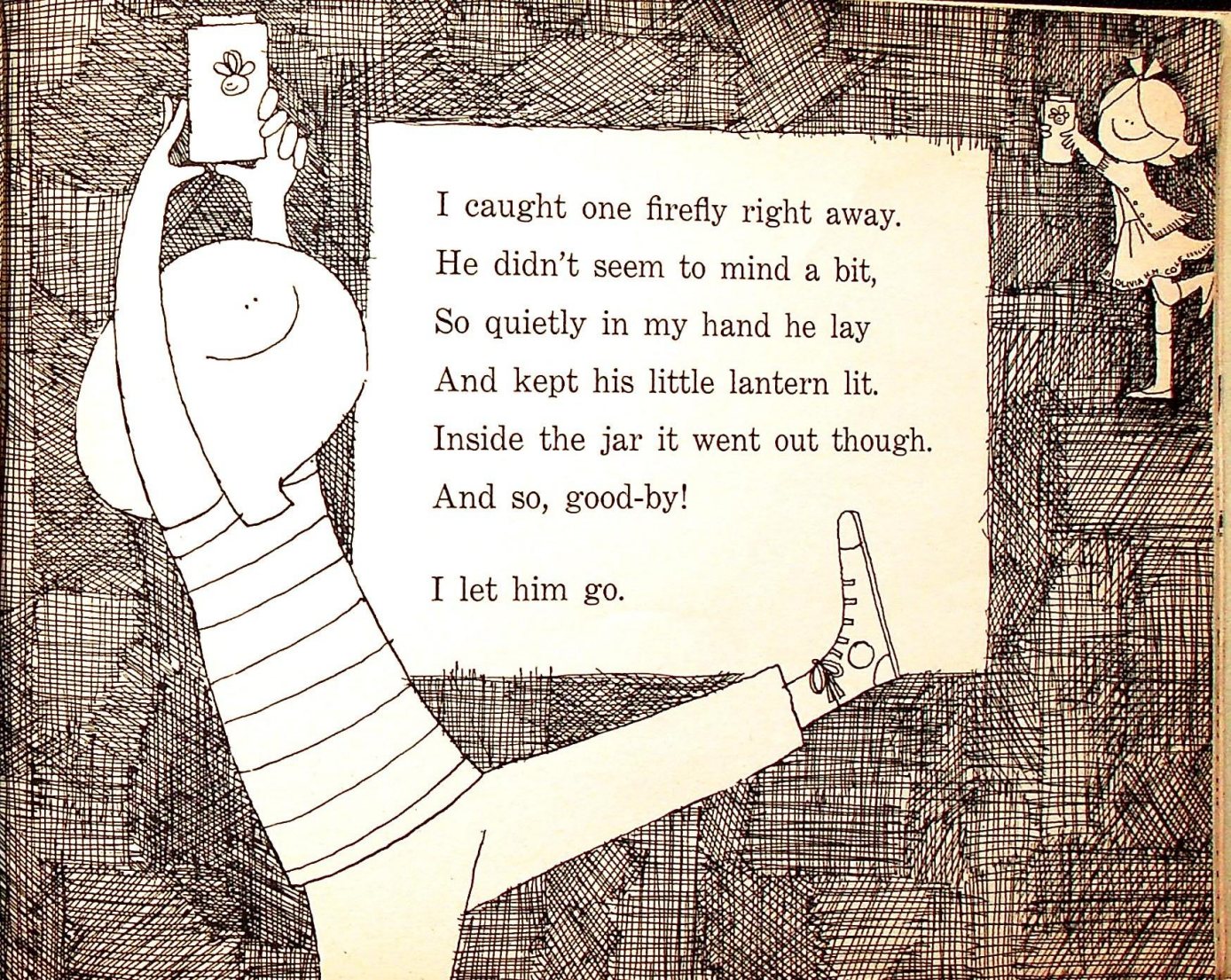
Little birds sing with their beaks
In the apple trees.
But little crickets in the grass
Are singing with their knees.





Fireflies

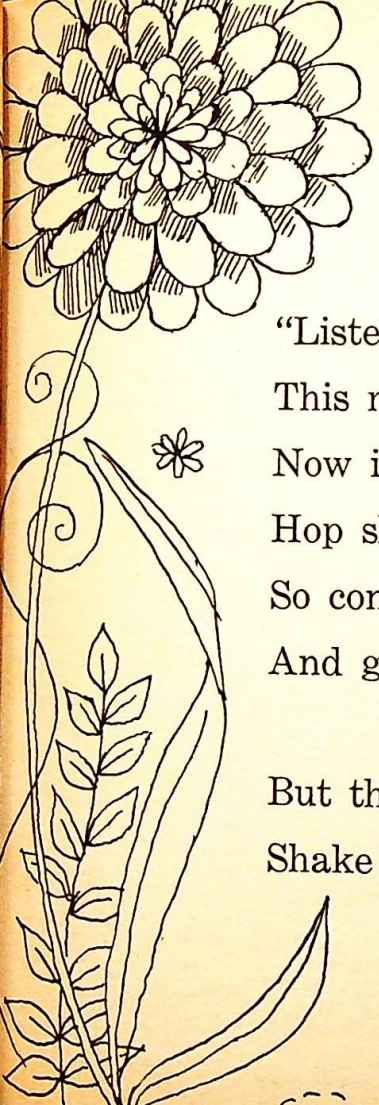
As soon as they began to spark
I asked my mother for a jar
And went out in the summer dark
All alone. And there they were:
A few of them were flying around
Just my distance
From the ground.


I caught one firefly right away.
He didn't seem to mind a bit,
So quietly in my hand he lay
And kept his little lantern lit.
Inside the jar it went out though.
And so, good-by!
I let him go.

The Grasshoppers

High
Up
Over the top
Of feathery grasses the
Grasshoppers hop.

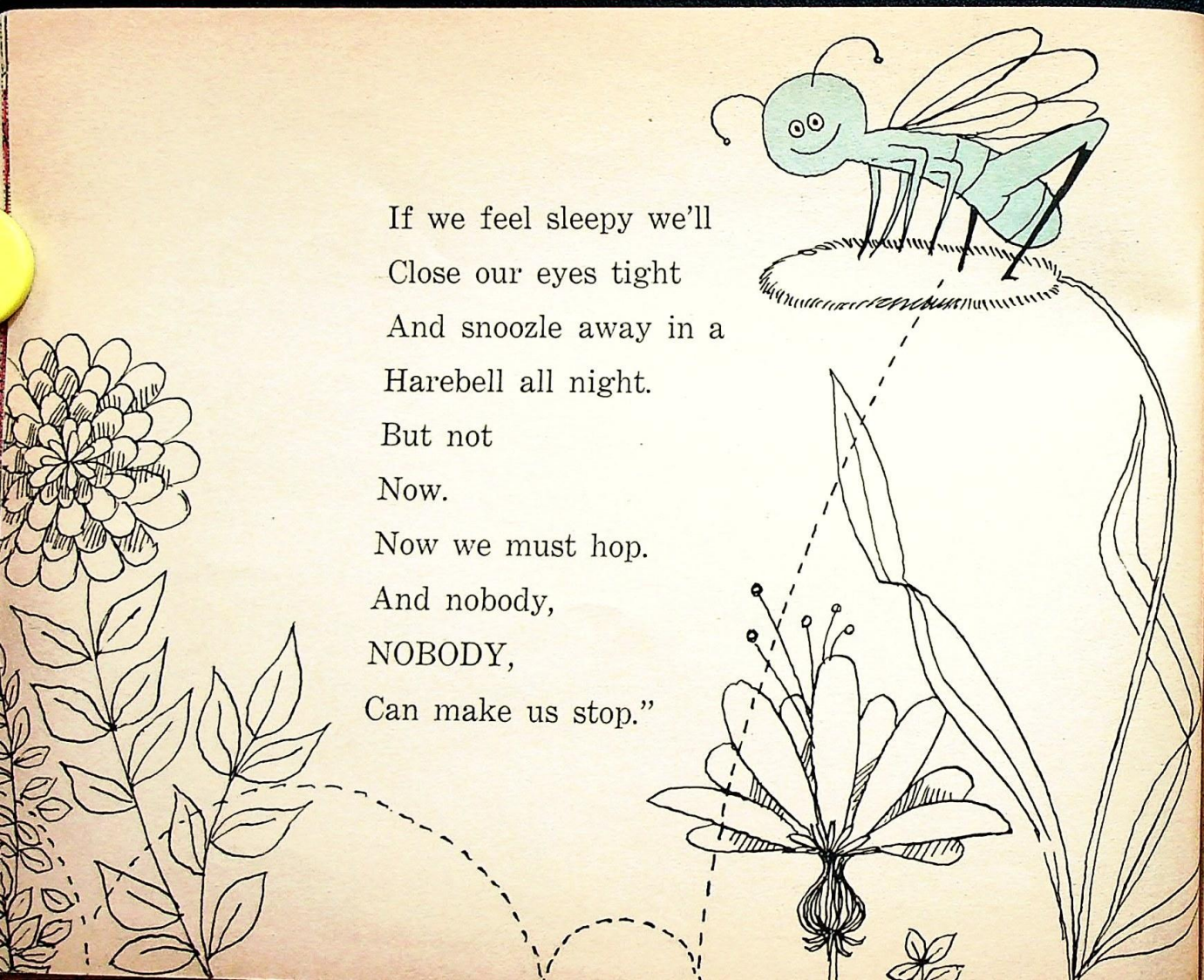
They won't eat their suppers;
They will not obey
Their grasshopper mothers
And fathers, who say,



"Listen, my children,
This must be stopped —
Now is the time your last
Hop should be hopped.
So come eat your suppers
And go to your beds —"

But the little green grasshoppers
Shake their green heads.

"No,
No —"
The naughty ones say,
"All we have time to do
Now is to play.
If we want supper we'll
Nip at a fly
Or nibble a blueberry
As we go by.



If we feel sleepy we'll
Close our eyes tight
And snoozle away in a
Harebell all night.
But not
Now.
Now we must hop.
And nobody,
NOBODY,
Can make us stop."

Inch-Worm

Little green inch-worm,
Inch-worm, inch.
You can't hurt me,
You don't pinch.
Never did anyone
Any harm
So *take* your little green walk
Up my arm.

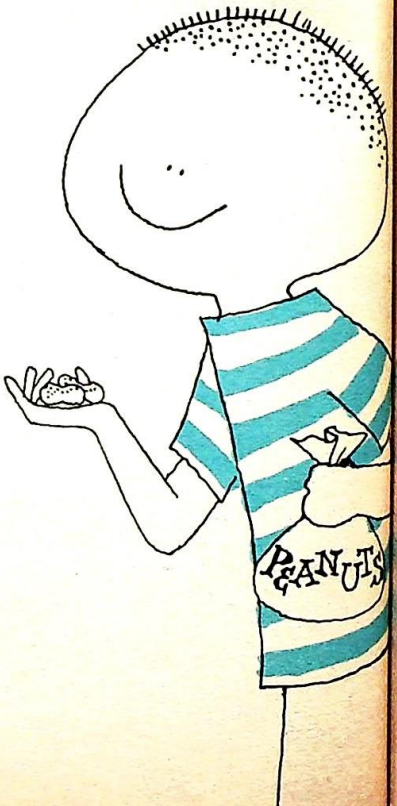
Don't Tell Me

Little squirrel in the park
Your tail is like a question mark.

Stop your frisking now and see
What I brought along with me.

Don't tell me you don't understand
That here's a peanut in my hand?

Squirrel dear, I know you know.
Now you have it.
There you go.

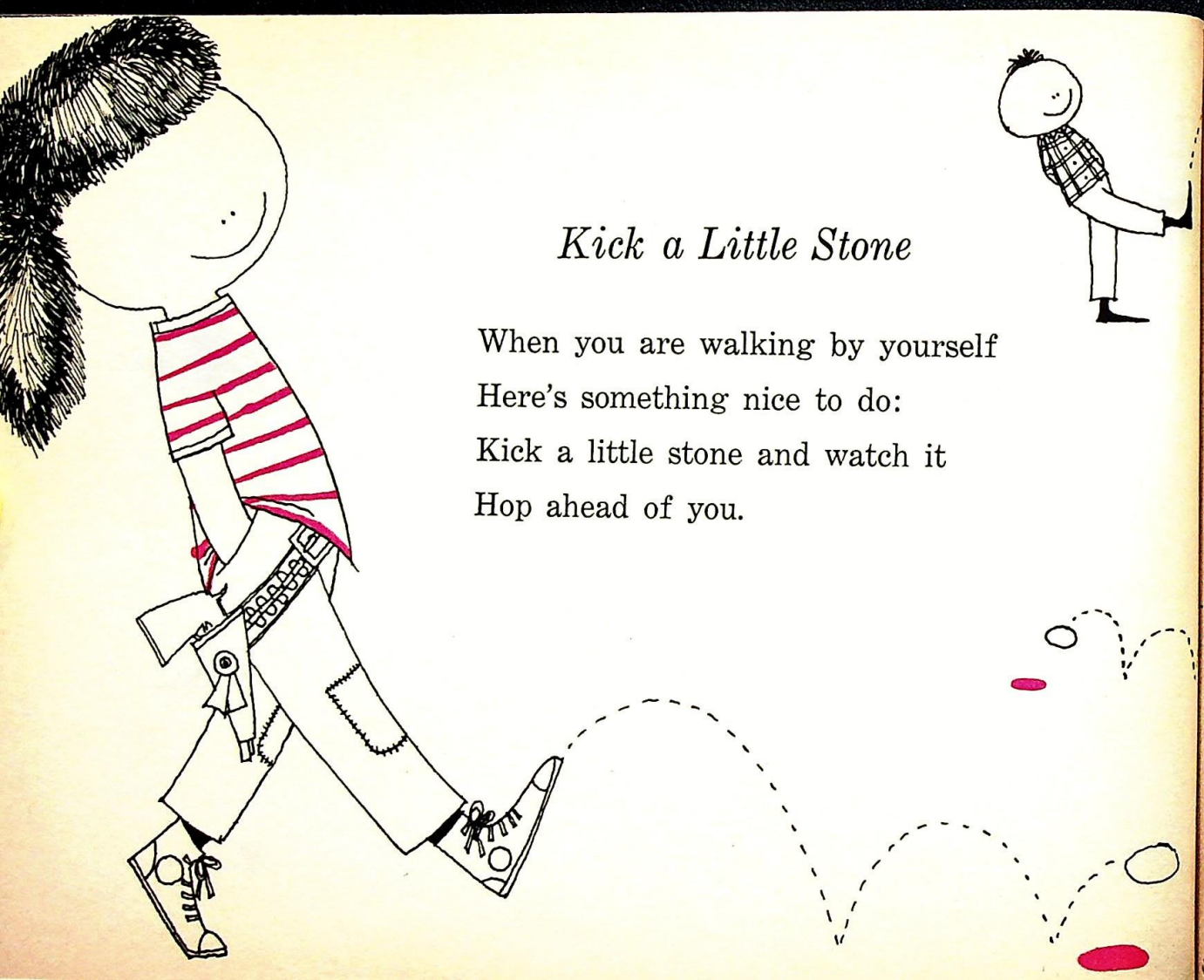


Supper for a Lion

Savage lion in the zoo,
Walking by on padded feet,
To and fro and fro and to,
You seem to think it's time to eat.

Then how about a bowl of stew
With Jello for dessert? Or would
A juicy bone be best for you?

Oh, please don't stare
as though you knew
That I'd taste good!

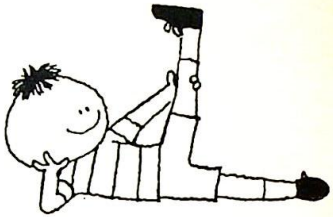


Kick a Little Stone

When you are walking by yourself
Here's something nice to do:
Kick a little stone and watch it
Hop ahead of you.

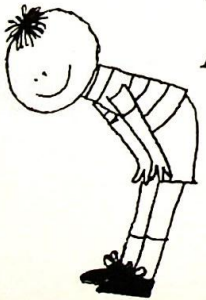
The little stone is round and white,
Its shadow round and blue.
Along the sidewalk over the cracks
The shadow bounces too.

The Sad Shoes

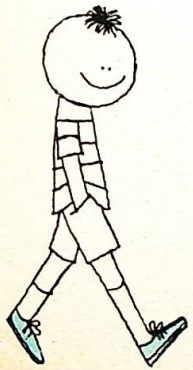


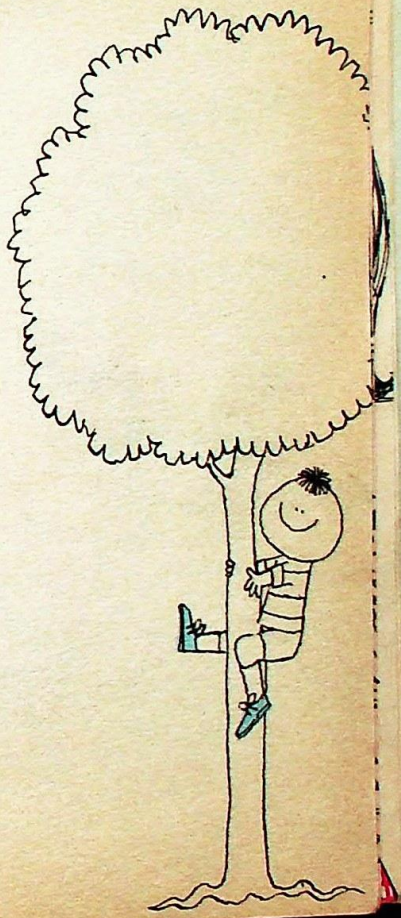
My poor old shoes are on the floor.
Last winter they were new.
Now I can't wear them any more.
Too many holes came through.

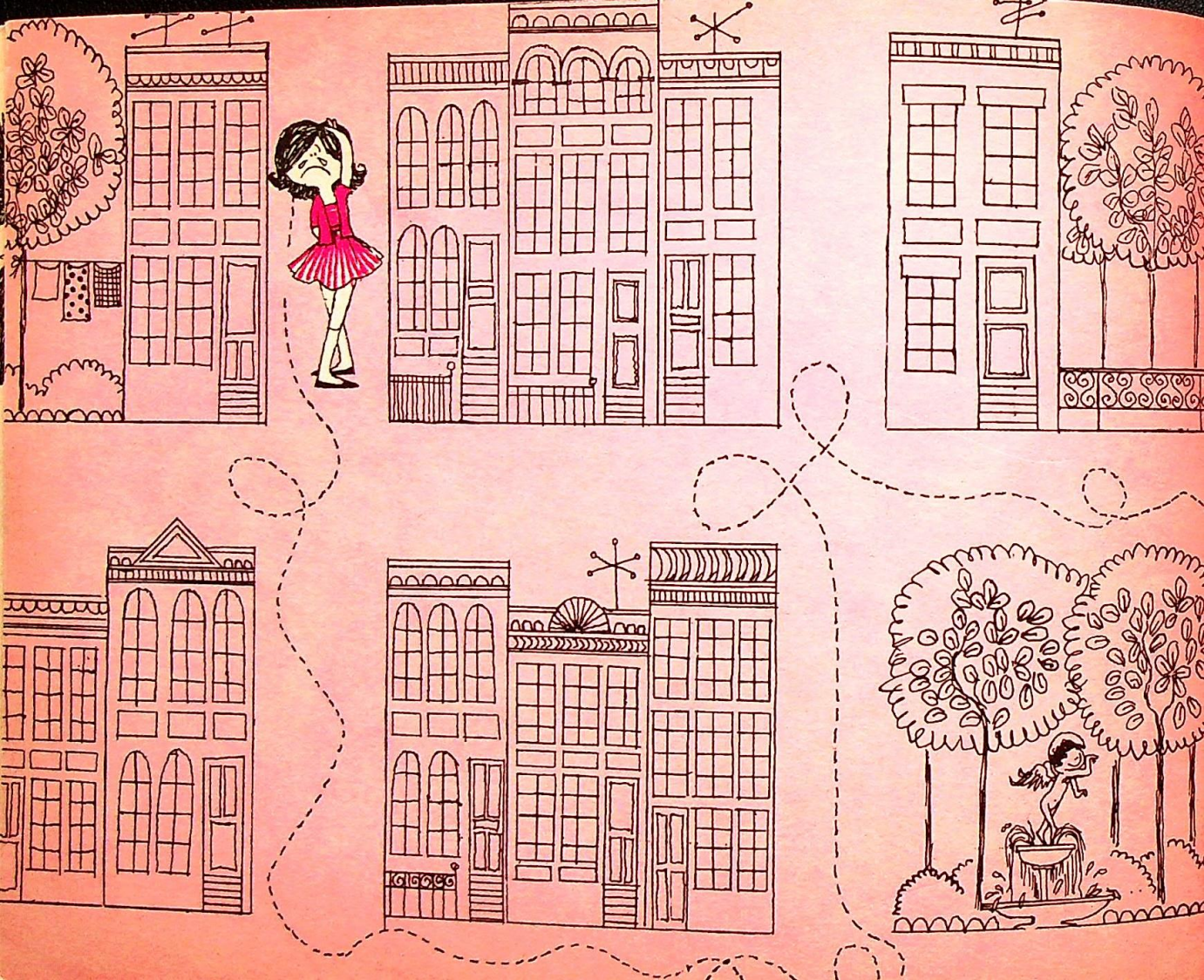
Today they had a nice time though
Climbing up a tree.
Tomorrow they'll be thrown away
And cannot play with me.

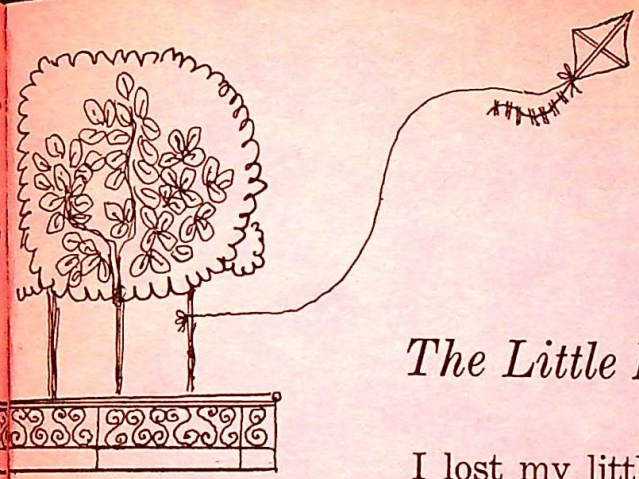


And doesn't this seem sad to you?
And do they maybe know?
I think perhaps they do — they lean
Upon each other so.



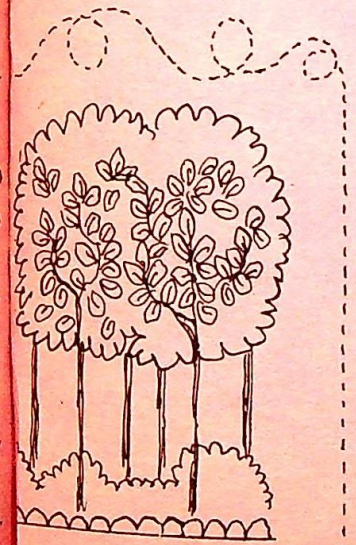


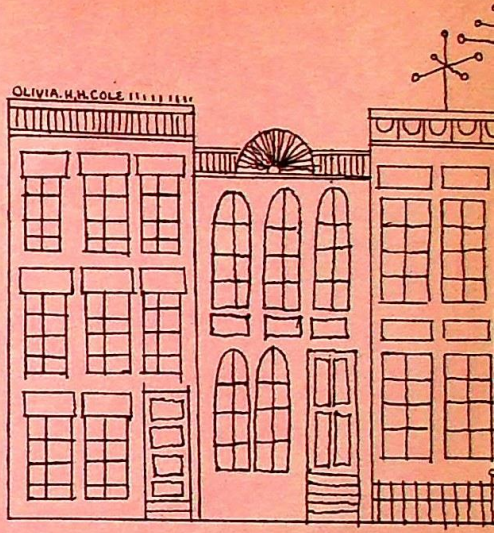


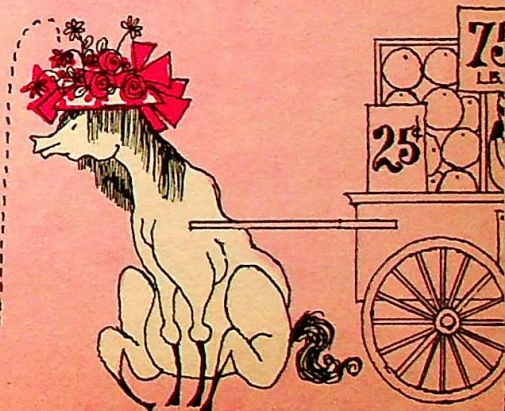


The Little Hat

I lost my little
Hat. It had
Ribbons round and
Round it.
And this made me very sad.
And I never found it.



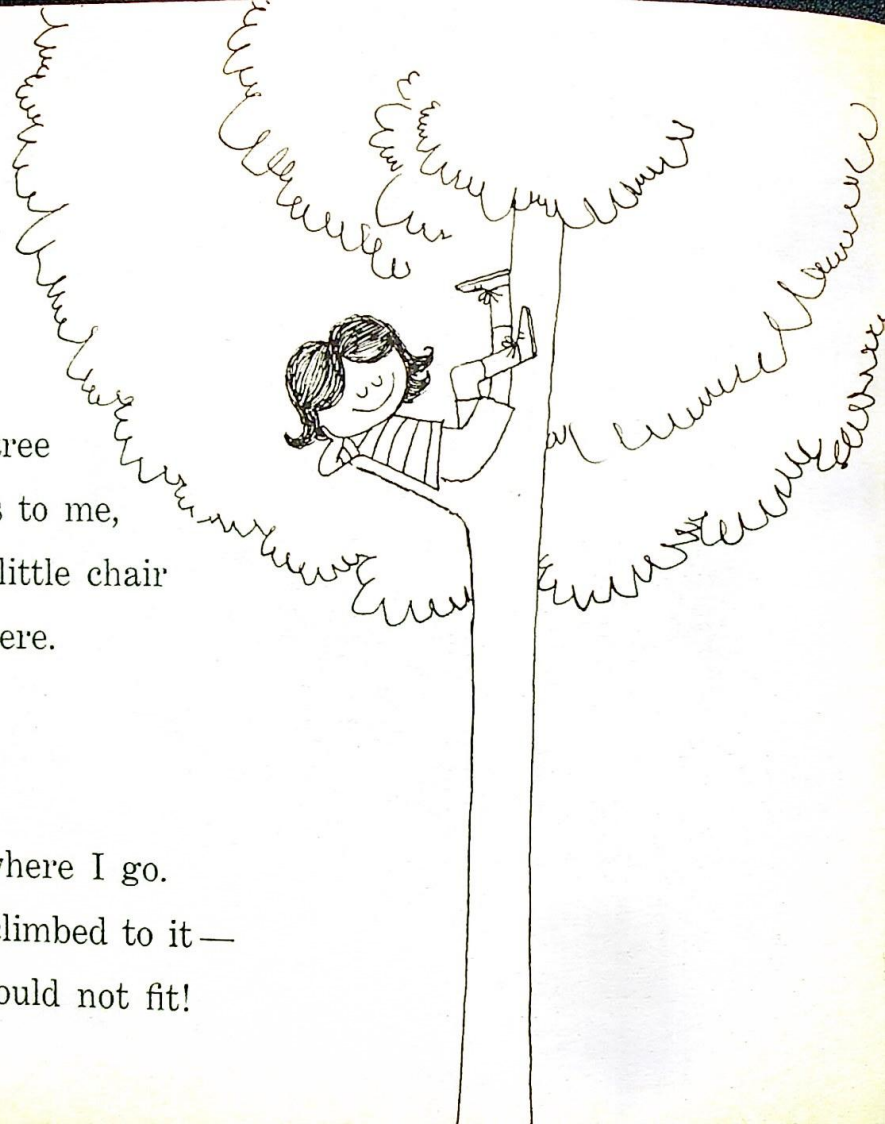




The Secret Place

Halfway up a certain tree
There's a place belongs to me,
Two branches make a little chair
And I like it sitting there.

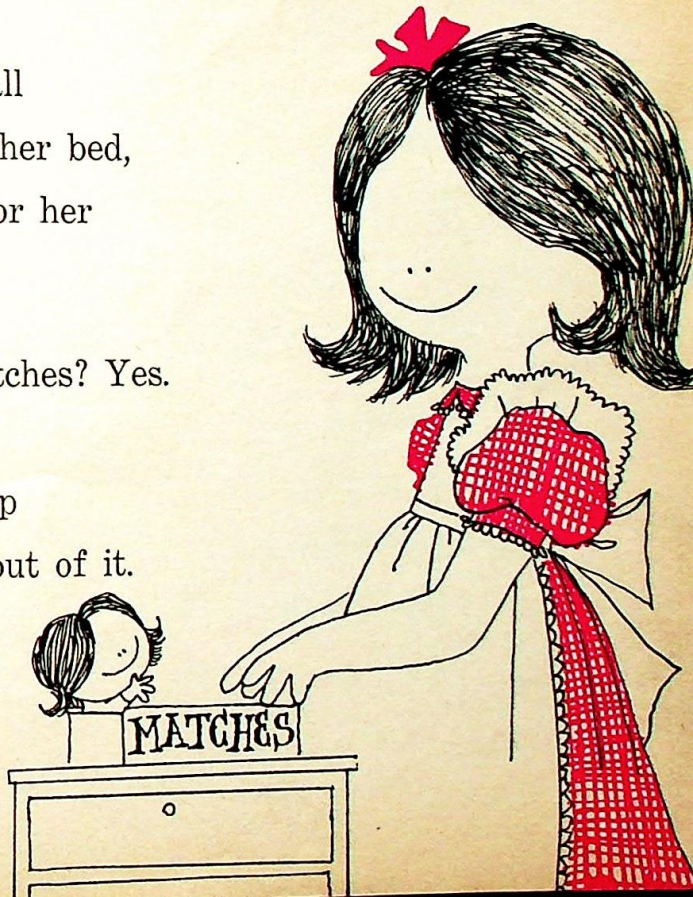
I like it.
And it's secret too.
No grownup guesses where I go.
And if he should, and climbed to it—
He would not fit, he would not fit!



Exactly Right

I have a little doll so small
I wonder what could be her bed,
Comfortable and right for her
From toes to head?

A matchbox without matches? Yes.
A very cozy little fit —
I slide the box's cover up
Till just her face looks out of it.



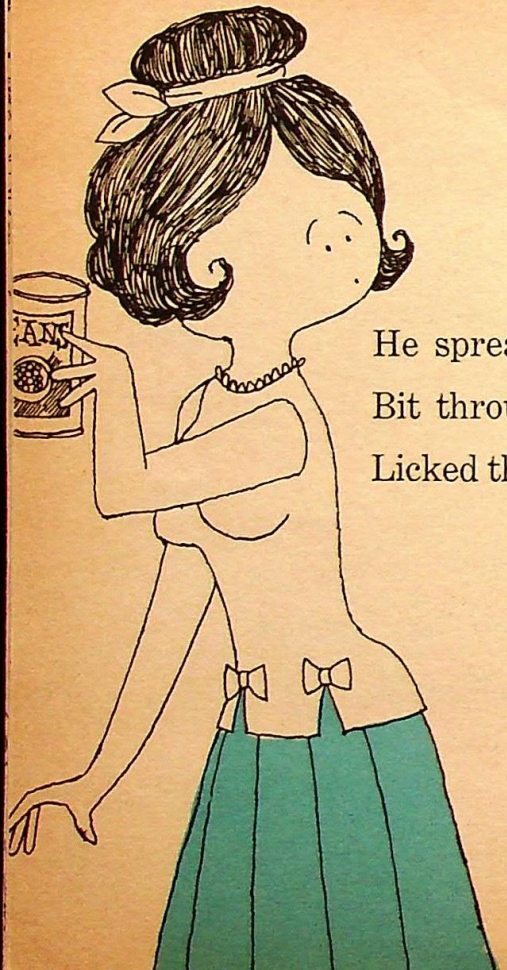
Little

I am the sister of him
And he is my brother.
He is too little for us
To talk to each other.

So every morning I show him
My doll and my book.
But every morning he still is
Too little to look.

My Brother

Today I went to market with my mother.
I always help her buy the things we eat.
Not sitting in the pushcart like my brother
Who gets our dinner piled around his feet.
I know where jam is. Coffee. Bread and butter.
Each thing I bring she says to Davy: "No!
Don't touch that, Sweetie!" Mostly Davy doesn't.
This morning Davy did some touching though —



He spread his hair with cottage cheese all over.
Bit through paper. Gave our ham a chew.
Licked the butter. "DAVY!" cried my mother.

She started in to scold my little brother.

Couldn't.

Burst out laughing.

I did too.

Watch Me

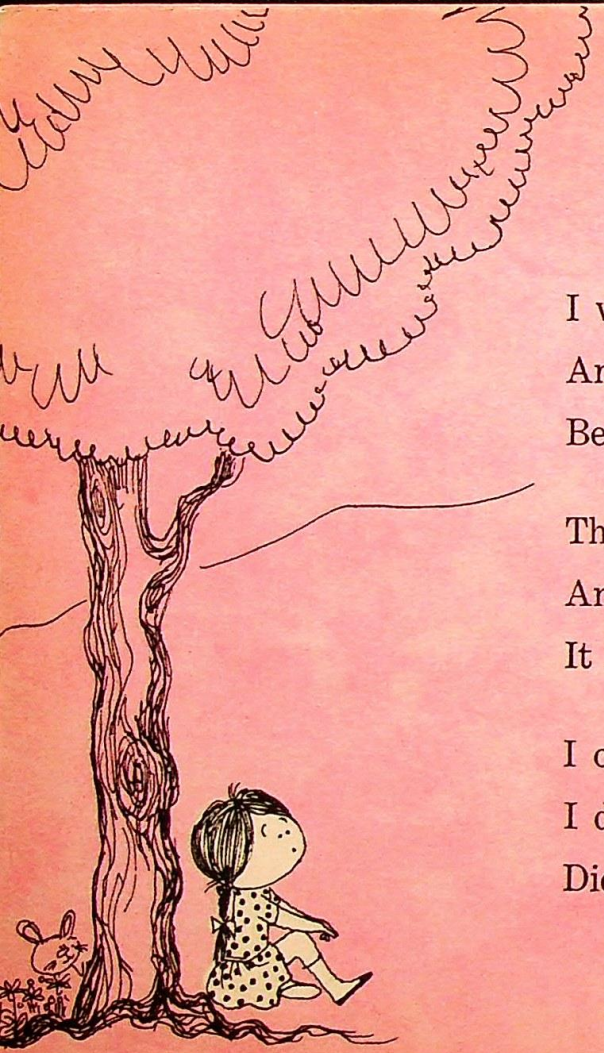
"I can run faster than you.
See me run faster than you.

And I can jump higher than you.
Watch me jump higher than you.

I even hide better than you —"
"I don't think that you do."

"Why don't you think that I do?"

"Easy to answer, easy as pie.
I see where you're hiding.
That's why."



Alone

I was alone the other day
And stopped to watch some children play
Beneath a tree.

They ran and ran and ran around
And then fell flat upon the ground.
It looked like fun to me.

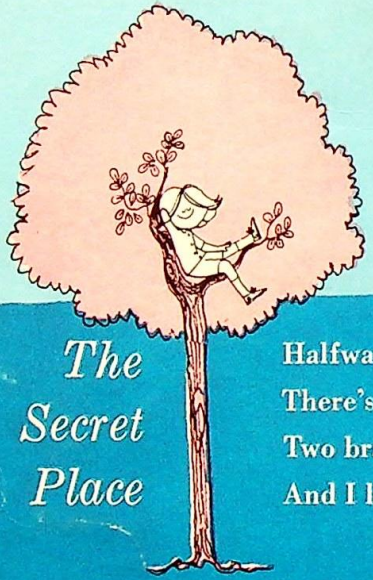
I only stood and watched them play.
I didn't know their names. And they
Did not know me.

Guessing Game

"Guess if I have a stone in my pocket."
"What I guess is Yes."
"You think I have a stone in my pocket?"
"I said that I guessed Yes."
"Well ha ha ha, then guess again."
"You haven't any stone there then?"
"No no no, that isn't so."
"You're saying neither Yes nor No?
Well have you a stone or haven't you? . . .
I guess I've guessed it:
You have two!"

Bursting

We've laughed until my cheeks are tight.
We've laughed until my stomach's sore.
If we could only stop, we might
Remember what we're laughing for.



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More poems inside!

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